

HOW TO STUDY AND LEARN!

A GUIDE



HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

- THIS GUIDE WAS PREPARED TO SUGGEST A VARIETY OF *STRATEGIES* FOR BECOMING A BETTER STUDENT.
- IN THIS GUIDE YOU WILL FIND IDEAS AS SUGGESTED BY THE FOUNDATION FOR CRITICAL THINKING.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

- CRITICAL THINKING IS THE KIND OF THINKING, ABOUT ANY SUBJECT, CONTENT, OR DOMAIN THAT IMPROVES ITSELF ***THROUGH DISCIPLINED ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT.*** ANALYSIS REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF THE ELEMENTS OF THOUGHT; ASSESSMENT REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF STANDARDS FOR THOUGHT.

- ALL THINKING OCCURS WITHIN, AND ACROSS, DISCIPLINES AND DOMAINS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE YET FEW LEARN HOW TO THINK WELL WITHIN THOSE DOMAINS. STUDENTS STUDY LITERATURE, BUT DO NOT THINK IN A LITERARY WAY AS A RESULT. THEY STUDY POETRY BUT DO NOT THINK POETICALLY. MOST DON'T KNOW HOW TO THINK LIKE A READER WHEN READING, A WRITER WHEN WRITING OR A LISTENER WHEN LISTENING.

THE SOLUTION:

- RAISE VITAL QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS WITHIN IT
- GATHER AND ASSESS INFORMATION
- COME TO WELL REASONED CONCLUSIONS AND SOLUTIONS, TESTING THEM AGAINST RELEVANT CRITERIA
- COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS USING THE LANGUAGE OF THE DISCIPLINE

- RELATE WHAT ONE IS LEARNING IN THE SUBJECT TO OTHER SUBJECTS AND TO WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT IN LIFE AND PURPOSE OF YOUR STUDY
- WHEN LEARNING: LOOK FOR INTERRELATIONSHIPS, TRY TO CONNECT EVERYTHING TOGETHER. THINK OF LEARNING AS FIGURING OUT THE PARTS OF AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM, WITH EVERYTHING FITTING TOGETHER LIKE THE PARTS OF A PUZZLE.

- VIRTUALLY ALL COURSES HAVE SOME INHERENT UNITY WHICH, WHEN UNDERSTOOD, TIES ALL THE LEARNING OF THE COURSE TOGETHER. THIS UNITY IS TYPICALLY FOUND IN IDEAS THAT DEFINE THE SUBJECT AND ITS GOALS.

KINESTHETIC- WHAT ONE FEELS, TOUCHES AND EXPERIENCES.

- HANDS-ON EXPERIMENTERS
- "LET ME DO IT."
- KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS ARE ACQUIRED
BY EXPERIENCING AN EVENT FIRST-
HAND, RATHER THAN FROM VISUAL OR
AURAL EXPERIENCES.

- WHATEVER THE IDEA OR GOAL OF THE COURSE, YOU MUST MAKE SURE YOU CAN STATE, ELABORATE, EXEMPLIFY AND ILLUSTRATE EACH OF THE IDEAS IN YOUR OWN WORDS WITH YOUR OWN EXAMPLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS. OTHERWISE.....YOU ARE MERELY MOUTHING WORDS THAT HAVE NO REAL MEANING IN YOUR MIND.

EXAMPLE:

- MATHEMATICS IS LEARNING TO THINK QUANTITATIVELY
- ECONOMICS IS THE STUDY OF "WHO GETS WHAT, WHEN AND HOW"
- ALGEBRA IS ARITHMETIC WITH UNKNOWNNS
- ETHICS IS THE STUDY OF PRINCIPLES TO BEUSED IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE GOOD OF, AND AVOIDING UNNECESSARY HARM TO ALL
- THEOLOGY IS THE STUDY OF THEORIES OF SPIRITUAL REALITY

- THE ESSENTIAL IDEA HERE IS THAT WHEN LEARNING ANY CONCEPT, IDEA, LAW, THEORY, OR PRINCIPLE, ASK YOURSELF: TO WHAT OTHER CONCEPTS, IDEAS, LAWS, THEORIES, OR PRINCIPLES IS THIS CONNECTED TO?

- AS YOU SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS, YOUR CONFIDENCE AND MOTIVATION SHOULD IMPROVE. GO THROUGH THE IDEAS IN THIS GUIDE OVER AND OVER AGAIN, RE-THINKING WHAT YOU ARE AND ARE NOT DOING AND IN DOING SO YOU SHOULD RAISE YOU TO FURTHER IMPROVEMENT.

IDEAS FOR BECOMING A GREAT STUDENT

- 1. MAKE SURE YOU *THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND* THE REQUIREMENTS OF EACH CLASS, HOW IT WILL BE TAUGHT, AND WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF YOU.
- 2. **BECOME AN ACTIVE LEARNER.** BE PREPARED TO WORK IDEAS INTO YOUR THINKING BY ACTIVE READING, WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING.

- **3. THINK OF EACH SUBJECT AS A FORM OF THINKING.** (IF YOU'RE IN THE HISTORY CLASS, THINK HISTORICALLY; IN THE ETHICS CLASS, THINK ETHICAL)
- **4. BECOME A QUESTIONER.** ENGAGE YOURSELF IN LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS BY ASKING QUESTIONS. IF YOU DON'T ASK QUESTIONS YOU'LL NEVER DISCOVER WHAT YOU DO KNOW AND DO NOT KNOW.

- **5. LOOK FOR INTERCONNECTIONS.** THE CONTENT IN EVERY CLASS IS ALWAYS A SYSTEM OF INERCONNECTED IDEAS, NEVER A RANDOM LIST OF THINGS TO MEMORIZE. **DON'T MEMORIZE LIKE A PARROT.**
- **6. THINK OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR AS A COACH.** THINK OF YOURSELF AS A TEAM MEMBER. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE LEGAL CLASS THINK OF YOURSELF AS GOING OUT FOR THE LEGAL TEAM AND YOUR INSTRUCTOR AS DEMONSTRATING HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE GAME (TEST).

- 7. **THINK OF THE TEXTBOOK, COURSE CONTENT AS THE THINKING OF THE AUTHOR. YOUR JOB IS TO THINK THE THINKING OF THE AUTHOR.**
- 8. **CONSIDER CLASS TIME AS A TIME WHICH YOU PRACTICE THINKING (WITHIN THE SUBJECT) USING THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE COURSE. DON'T JUST SIT BACK WAITING FOR KNOWLEDGE TO FALL INTO YOUR HEAD LIKE RAIN INTO A BARREL. IT WON'T!**

- 9. **RELATE CONTENT** WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AND PRACTICAL SITUATIONS IN YOUR LIFE, YOUR CHOSEN PROFESSION. IF YOU CAN'T CONNECT IT YOU DON'T KNOW IT.
- 10. **FIGURE OUT WHAT STUDY AND LEARNING SKILLS YOU ARE NOT GOOD AT.** PRACTICE THOSE SKILLS WHENEVER POSSIBLE. RECOGNIZING AND CORRECTING YOUR WEAKNESSES IS STRENGTH.

- 11. **ASK YOURSELF;** "CAN I EXPLAIN THIS TO SOMEONE NOT IN THE CLASS. IF NOT, THEN YOU HAVEN'T LEARNED IT WELL ENOUGH.
- 12. **SEEK TO FIND THE KEY CONCEPT** OF THE COURSE DURING THE FIRST COUPLE OF SESSIONS.
- 13. **ASK QUESTIONS** TO FILL THE MISSING PIECES IN YOUR MIND. CAN YOU ELABORATE FURTHER ON THIS? CAN YOU GIVE ME/US AN EXAMPLE?

- **14. TEST YOURSELF BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION BY TRYING TO SUMMARIZE, ORALLY OR IN WRITING THE MAIN POINT OF THE CLASS.**
- **15. LEARN TO TEST YOUR THINKING USING INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS. AM I CLEAR? ACCURATE? PRECISE? RELEVANT? LOGICAL? AM I LOOKING FOR WHAT IS MOST SIGNIFICANT?**
- **16. USE WRITING AS A WAY TO LEARN BY WRITING SUMMARIES IN YOUR OWN WORDS OF IMPORTANT POINTS FROM THE TEXTBOOK OR INSTRUCTION.**

- 17. **EVALUATE YOUR LISTENING.** ARE YOU ACTIVELY LISTENING FOR MAIN POINTS. CAN YOU SUMMARIZE WHAT YOUR INSTRUCTOR IS SAYING IN YOUR OWN WORDS? CAN YOU ELABORATE WHAT IS MEANT BY KEY TERMS?
- 18. **EVALUATE YOUR READING.** ARE YOU READING THE TEXT BOOK OR NOTES ACTIVELY? ARE YOU ASKING QUESTIONS AS YOU READ? CAN YOU DISTINGUISH WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND FROM WHAT YOU DON'T?

REMEMBER!

- THERE ARE THREE VERY DIFFERENT WAYS TO TAKE IN INFORMATION:
- 1. IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGLESS TO US,
- 2. IN A MISLEADING WAY, AND
- 3. IN A WAY THAT LEADS US TO IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE THROUGH WHICH WE CAN ACQUIRE FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT.

Good Luck!